



JEFFERSON PARK EXPANSION
PUBLIC MEETING #1
Thursday, September 29, 2005
Jefferson Community Center

MEETING SUMMARY

Staff Members

Present:

Randy Robinson, Project Manager
Carolyn Law, Pro Parks Arts Coordinator
Randy Smith, Jefferson Community Center Coordinator
Cheryl Fraser, Parks South Resource Manager

**Other Team Members
present:**

Greg Brower, Andy Mitton, and Jan Satterthwaite of the The Berger Partnership; Elizabeth Conner, Project Artist

Welcome:

Community members were welcomed to the meeting by Randy Robinson and other staff members were introduced.

Project Overview

Randy R. gave a brief overview of the history of Jefferson Park and the recent history of Parks Department projects at the park, including this one. The current project: Jefferson Park Expansion – Phase I has a budget of \$7.3 million for planning, design and construction of the park improvements. The area of the project was shown on the aerial photograph including the areas of the SPU north and south Beacon Reservoirs.

The schedule was outlined as: schematic design – summer/fall 2005, design Development – winter/spring 2006, Construction Documents – summer/fall/winter 2006, Construction Stage One – 2007, Construction Stage Two – 2008. The Jefferson Park Site Plan of 2002 was introduced with the commitment to stay as close to that plan as is possible considering all of the years of work that went into it.

**Highpoints of the
Design Program**

Randy R. described the purpose of the project Design Program, written in October of 2004. The Jefferson Park “vision” was read out loud to the group. The chapter of the Design Program pertaining to the prioritization of elements of the park was read, in part, to the group with special emphasis on the HIGH, MEDIUM, and LOW priority ranking system. The criteria for HIGH, MEDIUM and LOW priorities was discussed at some length with the group.

Questions pertaining to the history of the project and the Design Program were taken by Randy R. One question pertained to the start of the SPU reservoir project and Randy replied that construction on the reservoirs would start in the summer of 2006 and continue through 2008. One question was about additional funds that may be available from SPU for additional park amenities. Randy R. replied that he is not aware of funds for park amenities from SPU.

Another comment was that the experience at Cal Anderson Park (another park over a reservoir on Capital Hill) shows that it is hard to maintain

natural turf over a reservoir without substantial input of fertilizers – which SPU may not approve. Randy R. responded that the design team is still exploring various options of using synthetic turf or a combination of some synthetic turf and natural turf over the reservoir.

Carolyn Law gave an overview of the Pro Parks Arts Program and the 1% for Art project at Jefferson Park.

Discussion of Park Element Prioritization

The Berger Partnership, Landscape Architects were introduced to continue the discussion of prioritization of park elements to be included in the design of this project. Greg Brower started with a review of the Jefferson Park Site Plan of 2002 and a brief description of the major elements of that plan.

Greg continued the discussion of priorities by introducing the High Priority park elements (as defined by the Design Program) such as: demolition, grading, utilities, lawn, two tennis courts, play area, basic irrigation, lighting, extended community center parking lot, etc. A graphic display showed that High Priority elements would require about half of the budget available.

The Medium Priority park elements were then identified graphically as: plaza, extended irrigation, synthetic soccer field, walkways, water feature, promenade, enhanced planting of trees and shrubs, etc.

Low priority elements were graphically shown as: pedestrian overpass, restroom building, synthetic baseball field, western terrace, picnic shelter structures, Jefferson Play Field (Cricket), additional basketball court, additional tennis courts, new parking lot, etc.

After the graphic display of High, Medium and Low Priority park elements it was shown that the budget can only afford the High Priority items and some of the medium priority elements. The most important medium priority elements covered the remaining space on the graphic display with much overlap with other elements.

A question was raised about a cross walk across Spokane Street at Lafayette instead of an expensive overpass. Randy R. responded that he did not think a crosswalk was mentioned in the previous planning documents. A traffic study would need to determine the safety aspects of a crosswalk there – it may have already been studied and rejected as an option, hence the overpass.

How did soccer become a priority over other sports? Greg responded that there is consensus from our Project Advisory Team that on Beacon Hill, the need for soccer is greater than the need for baseball and softball. The project hopes to do both soccer and baseball/softball but maybe in a less formal layout.

A comment from Terry Holme (Seattle Parks Board member) was that both soccer and baseball were always a part of the planning for this project. The community has always wanted more soccer fields, but where does Franklin High School baseball play? Also, he advised that we should be careful

about calling places with views as “Viewpoints”. There are specific requirements for Viewpoint designation. Randy R. said that Parks will look into those issues.

Several comments were raised about parking. How about an underground parking garage in the space of the current North Beacon Reservoir? Randy R. and Greg responded that that was the first we had heard of that.

What about bathrooms? Can the community center serve as restrooms for the park if restrooms are not funded in the project? After some discussion, restrooms were added to the group of High Priority elements when Randy Smith mentioned that the Jefferson Community Center restrooms were often closed during times that the park would be used (open on Saturdays only 9 months/year, not open on Sundays, etc). The community center restrooms are located in the center of the building and would be hard to retrofit to an outside entrance.

What kind of trees would be used in the park? Greg responded that it would be too early to mention specific species, but generally park type trees would be used: some large canopy types, some smaller flowering types, maybe some species that were significant from a cultural standpoint.

One question was raised about grading. Greg Brower responded that there would be minimum amount of grading that would be required and would have to be considered a High Priority.

What about bleachers? No bleachers are planned at this time; future bleachers would probably be low bleachers (Greg B.).

Can the soccer field be used for other uses? Yes, but the north meadow area may be better suited to concerts (Greg B.). The question of other uses such as events and concerts raises another question about future events in the park – what kind of cultural events are foreseen for the park and how many people would attend an event?

Comments:

- 1) Beacon Hill Festival – 1500 people attended
- 2) Jazz & Amphitheater
- 3) Weddings
- 4) Rentals at the Community Center
- 5) Concerts in the Park
- 6) Movies in the Park
- 7) Fun runs and other uses considered for the pathways
- 8) Day camp programs
- 9) Japanese language school picnics -- Historic Picnic grounds – flowering trees
- 10) Cinco de Mayo Parade – Begin at Beacon & First and end in Park
- 11) Fireworks on 4th of July
- 12) Golf Tournament
- 13) Soccer Jamboree
- 14) Lawn Bowling and Tournaments

The proposed plaza could be a place for gathering of people and festivals could spill out onto large grass areas (Greg B.). How big should the plaza be? Someone commented that the plaza would be used by the elderly.

Why does the plaza look like such an expensive feature? The cost is based on the level of finishes that is expected for a space of this size (Greg B.).

Several comments were made about the high quality of the water feature at Cal Anderson Park. Also, it was mentioned that water is important at Jefferson as well.

One question was whether the Cumulative Reserve Fund money for the play area renovation was part of the \$7.3 million. Yes (Randy R.). The only money that is separate is the 1% for arts.

Are the SPU 1% funds also used here? Carolyn Law responded by explaining that the 1% funds for Parks and SPU were combined for Jefferson.

A comment was made that walkways are important and should be high quality. Greg B. responded that walkways are an important piece of this park, and the Olmstead tradition is a good model to follow. Concrete is important and a good traditional material that should be considered. Asphalt would not be good.

Could the 1% for the arts money be used to enhance the paving? Carolyn Law responded that that the art work is planned to be a separate statement.

A question was posed: what kind of benches would be used. Greg and Randy responded that a Parks standard bench of high quality would be selected later in the process.

What is timing of replacing the play area? Where do the kids go in the time it takes to build the new play area if the old one is gone? Randy R. responded that this is something that will need to be considered in part of the planning for the park development.

The possibility of building an underground parking garage in the foot print of the North Beacon Reservoir was raised again. The comment was made that we are forgetting golfers & there is revenue that can be made by charging for parking (this was mentioned a long time ago). We should strongly consider this for events - Lawn Bowling gets crowded when there are tournaments. Greg Brower and Andy Mitton from the Berger Partnership responded: that from previous experience with parking garages - the cost is about \$50,000 per car which would put that kind of facility into the low priority category because of the high cost and low return.

Someone commented that private investment money would be required to finance a garage. A comment was made that commuters may want to use the parking along Beacon Ave. and then walk down to the Sound Transit station. Another person mentioned that the VA Hospital parking lot is

mostly empty on weekends. Also, the Citywide Horticulture facility parking lot may be made available on weekends. It was mentioned that 16th Avenue could also provide parking opportunity if there were some slight street improvements.

Final comments: Flowering trees are nice, but the winds on the hill are fierce; hence, trees need to be sturdy.

Paving, light fixtures, benches, etc. should be appropriate to a 90+ year old park (charming and old-fashioned). No asphalt.

Flowering trees & shrubs such as camellias sited so as not to obstruct views
“Conservatory” type green house in conjunction with Horticulture that is open to the public

Water feature – Environmental Education.

Conclusion:

Randy Robinson concluded the meeting at 8:30 and mentioned that if anyone wanted to make additional comments, there were comment cards and pens by the front door. Randy R. also provided business cards for people to contact him directly.

Next meeting:

The next meeting will take place in early to mid December. Notices will be mailed out and information placed in local newspapers and on the website.

Additional Information is Available:

- Park web site: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/jeffersonparkexpansion.htm>
- Randy Robinson, Seattle Parks Project Manager, (206) 684-7035; randy.robinson@seattle.gov